Collaboration is the Key to Successfully Solving Criminal Justice Problems

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Session Overview

- *What* is collaboration?

- *Why* should we collaborate?

- *Who* should we partner with?

- *How* do we get started?

The Problem with Collaboration

- Is that everyone thinks they are doing it!
- "Collaboration" has become the "buzz word" of today.
  - We sign MOU's.
  - We meet once or periodically.
  - We go on doing what we've been doing for the most part, and believe we are collaborating.

Collaboration Versus…

- In fact, most people do not truly collaborate, and this inhibits their ability to become a highly effective team.

- Rather, most of us are accustomed to:
  – Networking (exchanging information);
  – Coordinating (slightly altering activities); and/or
  – Cooperating (sharing resources).

- Collaboration reaches beyond the concepts of networking, coordinating, and cooperating.

A Working Definition of Collaboration

Collaboration is working together to achieve a common goal that cannot be achieved without our partners.

Why is Collaboration Important for Solving Criminal Justice Problems?

Offenders Face Many Barriers

- Limited housing
- Unemployment
- Educational needs
- Mental health difficulties

- Healthcare needs
- Financial instability
- Family concerns
- Public sentiment

No single agency can effectively address these issues alone.

Multi-agency collaboration is essential.

Multi-Agency Collaboration is Required on Several *Different* Levels

Case Management Teams

■ Individuals providing direct services to offenders (and their families) can:
- ■ Provide additional information/perspective on offender needs
- ■ Assist in the development of appropriate intervention strategies
- ■ Provide access to services and supports to supplement those available within corrections
- ■ Support ongoing monitoring and follow up activities

■ Case management plans that are developed with input from all of the key individuals involved in the management of the case will:
- ■ Be broader and more comprehensive; and
- ■ Provide for greater coordination and continuity in care.

State, Regional, and Local Policy Level Teams

- Individuals that have policy and decisionmaking authority can:
    - Open access to new resources or services previously unavailable to offenders returning from confinement
    - Promote our joint efforts in public and policymaking discussions
    - Assure access to line staff so that they are able to serve as members of case management teams

Who Should be Involved?

- Individuals, agencies, and organizations that:
  - Have a vested interest in community safety
  - Are directly or indirectly responsible for offender management
  - Work closely with – or advocate for – victims
  - Can provide mentoring or positive social supports
  - Offer educational and vocational services
  - Can promote access to appropriate and affordable housing
  - Deliver healthcare services
  - Provide mental health services
  - Have the ability to facilitate access to employment
  - Can provide support and assistance to children and families of formerly incarcerated individuals

Examples of Key Stakeholders

Juvenile

- Juvenile and Family Courts
- Juvenile Corrections or Youth Services agencies
- Social services agencies
- Child welfare and family services agencies
- Education partners
- Employment officials
- Releasing authorities
- Health and behavioral health representatives
- Mentors
- Faith-based partners

Adult

- Criminal Courts
- Adult Corrections agencies
- Community supervision agencies
- Paroling authorities
- Mental Health agencies
- Public Health departments and other healthcare agencies
- Veteran's Affairs officials
- Housing authorities
- Employment agencies
- Social Services agencies
- Faith-based partners

Lessons from Other Public Policy Arenas

The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

"Earlier in this report we detailed various missed opportunities to thwart the 9/11 plot. Information was not shared, sometimes inadvertently or because of legal misunderstandings. Analysis was not pooled. Effective operations were not launched. *Often the handoffs of information were lost across the divide* separating the foreign and domestic agencies of the government.

However the specific problems are labeled, we believe they are symptoms of the government's broader inability to adapt how it manages problems to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. *The agencies are like a set of specialists in a hospital, each ordering tests, looking for symptoms, and prescribing medications. What is missing is the attending physician who makes sure they work as a team.*"

The 9/11 Commission Report, Page 353

"We recommend significant changes in the organization of the government. We know that the quality of the people is more important than the quality of the wiring diagrams. Some of the saddest aspects of the 9/11 story are the outstanding efforts of so many individual officials straining, often without success, against the boundaries of the possible. *Good people can overcome bad structures. They should not have to.*"

The 9/11 Commission Report, Page 399

"Following September 11, everyone promised that the nation would learn the painful lessons the terrorist attack taught. But Hurricane Katrina not only revealed that we have failed to learn, it also showed that we have yet to build the capacity to deal with costly, [complex] problems.… *Even worse, we continually show the wrong instinct: to try to draw a box around every new case. We are trying to solve the most important challenges of the 21st century by retreating back to models from the past*."

Making Collaboration Work

Lawson and LaFasto
The Evidence-Basis for a Collaborative Approach

- Executive Management Teams, for example:
  - Baxter International
  - Dun and Bradstreet Corporation
  - Mt. Sinai Hospital
- Project Teams, for example:
  - McDonald's Chicken McNugget Team
  - IBM PC Team
  - Boeing 747 Airplane Project
- Hypothesis Testing
  - Disaster teams
  - Theatre productions
  - USS Kitty Hawk
  - Presidential Cabinets
  - GAO and Congressional investigation teams
  - U.S. Navy Strike Warfare Center

Adapted from concepts in TeamWork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong, by Carl E. Larson and Frank M. LaFasto. 1989 Sage Publications.

Characteristics of Successful Teams

- A clear and elevating goal
- A results-driven structure
- Competent team members
- Unified commitment
- A collaborative climate
- Standards of excellence
- External support and recognition
- Principled leadership

A Clear and Elevating Goal

- High performance teams have both a clear understanding of the goal to be achieved and a belief that the goal embodies a worthwhile or important result.

  – **The greater the clarity of understanding regarding the nature of the problem being addressed, the more effective people are at solving the problem.**

What Does the Research Say?

- The most effective teams are those who are focused squarely on the result because *whether or not the team succeeds clearly makes a difference*.

- The greatest threat to successfully working toward a clear and elevating goal is *politics and personal agenda*.

A Results-Driven Structure

- The importance of structure is not in its presence or absence. *More important is whether a structure is in place that is appropriate for the achievement of the performance objectives.*

- To be successful, a team's structure should be designed around the results to be achieved.

What Does the Research Say?

A results-driven structure makes the achievement of a clear, elevating goal possible.

- Clear roles and accountabilities;
- An effective communication system;
- Monitoring performance and providing feedback; and
- Fact-based judgments;

These become the framework through which the clear, elevating goal can be achieved.

Competent Team Members

- "Competent" team members are those who are best equipped to achieve the team's objectives.

- Competency is defined as the necessary skills and abilities to achieve the desired objective (technical competencies) and the personal characteristics required to achieve excellence while working well with others (personal competencies).

- Technical competencies are minimal requirements of any team. They include substantive knowledge, skills and abilities related to the specific tasks at hand.

- Personal competencies refer to the qualities, skills, and abilities necessary for the individual team members to identify, address, and resolve issues and to be successful working in a collaborative environment.

What Does the Research Say?

- When strong technical skills are combined with a desire to contribute and an ability to be collaborative, the observable outcome is an elevated sense of confidence among team members.

- This confidence translates into the ability of a team to be self-correcting in its capacity to adjust to unexpected adversity and emergent challenges.

What Does the Research Say?

- When team members believe:
  - In each other;
  - That each team member will bring superior skills to a task or responsibility;
  - That disagreements or opposing views will be worked out reasonably;
  - That each member's view will be treated seriously and with respect;
  - That all team members will give their best effort at all times; and
  - That everyone will have the team's overall best interest at heart;

…then excellence becomes a sustainable reality.

Unified Commitment

- Perhaps this is the most elusive of the eight traits. It is best characterized by:
  - Team spirit;
  - A sense of loyalty and dedication to the team;
  - An unrestrained sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the team;
  - A willingness to do anything that has to be done to help the team succeed;
  - An intense identification with the people who *are* the team;
  - A loss of self (There is no "I" in T-E-A-M); and
  - The unique (oftentimes emotional) experience of being a part of something special, something productive, something worthwhile.

Features of 'Unified Commitment'

■ **Commitment**

– **Teams do not excel in the achievement of a clear, elevating goal without significant individual investment of time and energy.** Genuine dedication to the goal and a willingness to expend the necessary amount of energy to achieve it are essential.

■ **Unity**

– **Group spirit and teamwork are indispensable to superior performance.**
   ■ Both come about as a result of one's identification with a team.
– In that identification, there is a relinquishment of self – not a denial of self – but a voluntary redefinition of self in this particular context.
– Boundaries between self and others become blurred – there is an increase in emotional commerce; an open exchange between self and others.
– Emotional bonding and identification with the team are the result.

It is Challenging to Build a Unified Commitment Deliberately and Systematically

- **There is a direct positive relationship between involvement and commitment.** Participation increases motivation, effort, and ultimately, success.

What Does the Research Say?

- One of the most serious threats to a team is the *conflict between individual and team goals.*

A Collaborative Climate

- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
- Working well together.
- Characterized by structural differentiation (roles, responsibilities, accountabilities), and a climate created among the leader and all team members.
- Trust is a mainstay virtue.

Trust is Produced in a Climate that Includes Four Elements

- **Honesty** – Integrity, truthfulness
- **Openness** – A willingness to share and be receptive to new ideas
- **Consistency** – Predictable behavior and responses
- **Respect** – Dignity and fairness

What Does the Research Say?

- Collaboration flourishes in a climate of trust.
- Trust allows team members to stay problem-focused.
- Trust promotes more efficient communication and coordination.
- Trust improves the quality of collaborative outcomes.
- Trust leads to compensating (one team member picks up the slack when another team member falters).
  - Compensating has a very positive relationship to success. Teams that are able to function in this way are able to achieve higher levels of performance.

Standards of Excellence

- A standard is the pressure to achieve a required or expected level of performance.

- Standards define those relevant and very intricate expectations that eventually determine whether the level of performance is acceptable.

Standards Establish the…

- Type of technical competency required;
- Amount of initiative and effort required;
- Group's expectations regarding how members will behave toward one another;
- Firmness of deadlines; and
- Ways in which results will be achieved.

Standards are primarily, if not completely, driven by

members' values and principles.

Pressure to Perform Comes from a Variety of Sources

- The personal standards of individual group members.
- The consequences of success or failure.
- External pressure.
- The team leader.
- Team pressure.

What Does the Research Say?

- **Three variables integral to establishing and sustaining standards of excellence**
  - The extent to which:
    - **Standards are clearly and concretely articulated.**
    - **Team members require one another to perform according to the established standards of excellence.**
    - **A team exerts pressure on itself to make those changes that will improve the performance standards.**
      - Successful teams do not become complacent. They actively work at finding reasons to be dissatisfied with their performance. Each performance is an opportunity to discover ways of doing it better next time.

External Support and Recognition

- The team is given the resources it needs to get the job done.
- The team is supported by those individuals and agencies outside the team who are capable of contributing to the team's success.
- The team is sufficiently recognized for its accomplishments.

What Does the Research Say?

- External support and recognition seems to be more *an effect* of team success than *a cause* of it.

Principled Leadership

Effective leaders draw people together – they inspire vision and they promote confidence in the opportunity for change, and the ability to meaningfully involve others in the change process.

What Does the Research Say?

- The most effective leaders are those who:
  - **Create attention through vision** – Creating a focus that is compelling and results-oriented;
  - **Create meaning through communication** – The capacity to relate a compelling vision powerfully enough to induce enthusiasm and action;
  - **Establish trust through positioning** – Assuring the leader's behavior exemplifies the ideals of the group and the vision; and
  - **Subjugate themselves** – Cast aside their own egos in favor of the group's goal.

Lessons Learned

1. **Start wherever you can** — collaboration can begin at the "top" or at the ground level.

2. **Begin clearly focused on the goal** you hope to achieve. Your "vision" will inspire others to join you.

3. **Be patient.** True partnerships can take time to build.

4. **Focus on building trust and relationships.** These are the single most important ingredients to a successful collaboration.

   - Trust must be based upon mutual respect and an understanding of the opportunities – and limits – each partner brings to the table.

5. **The capacity for change must be built**; it is not a naturally occurring phenomenon.

6. Be aware of, and understand, historical relationships between groups of people and agencies. **Be informed by your history, not shaped by it.**

The Benefits of Collaboration

- The quality of our results increase when a problem is addressed through collaboration. *Why is this so?*

    – **Individuals and organizations who work jointly, rather than independently, are likely to analyze problems and opportunities more comprehensively.**

    – **More comprehensive analyses are likely to generate more creative and impactful solutions.**

    – **Sharing information and working together helps to eliminate duplication of effort — something no one can afford, particularly in an environment of scare resources.**

    – Individuals and organizations who work jointly are also more likely to have at their disposal complementary resources that expand our capacity to accomplish critical tasks.